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The TATLER.

By *Iſaac Bickerſtaff* Eſq;

——— *Sequiturq; Patrem non paſſibus æquis.* Virg.

From *Thurſday April* 6. to *Saturday April* 8. 1710.

From my own Apartment, April 7.

WE have already deſcribed out of *Homer* the Voyage of *Ulyſſes* to the Infernal Shades, with the ſeveral Adventures that attended it. If we look into the beautiful Romance publiſhed not many Years ſince by the Archbiſhop of *Cambray*, we may ſee the Son of *Ulyſſes* bound on the ſame Expedition, and after the ſame Manner making his Diſcoveries among the Regions of the Dead. The Story of *Telemachus* is formed altogether in the Spirit of *Homer*, and will give an unlearned Reader a Notion of that great Poet's Manner of Writing, more than any Tranſlation of him can poſſibly do. As it was written for the Inſtruction of a young Prince, who may one Day ſit upon the Throne of *France*, the Author took Care to ſuit the ſeveral Parts of his Story, and particularly the Deſcription we are now entring upon, to the Character and Quality of his Pupil. For which Reaſon, he inſiſts very much on the Miſery of bad, and the Happineſs of good Kings, in the Account he hath given of Puniſhments and Rewards in the other World.

We may however obſerve, notwithſtanding the Endeavours of this great and learned Author to copy after the Style and Sentiments of *Homer*, that there is a certain Tincture of Chriſtianity running through the whole Relation. The Prelate in ſeveral Places mixes himſelf with the Poet; ſo that his future State puts me in Mind of *Michael Angelo*'s Laſt Judgment, where *Charon* and his Boat are repreſented as bearing a Part in the dreadful Solemnities of that great Day.

Telemachus, after having paſſed through the dark Avenues of Death in the Retinue of *Mercury*, who every Day delivers up a certain Tale of Ghoſts to the Ferryman of *Styx*, is admitted into the Infernal Bark. Among the Companions of his Voyage, is the Shade of *Nabopharzon*, a King of *Babylon*, and Tyrant of all the *Eaſt*. Among the Ceremonies and Pomps of his Funeral, there were Four Slaves ſacrificed, according to the Cuſtom of the Country, in order to attend him among the Shades. The Author having deſcribed this Tyrant in the moſt odious Colours of Pride, Inſolence, and Cruelty, tells us, That his Four Slaves, inſtead of ſerving him after Death, were perpetually inſulting him with Reproaches and Affronts for his paſt Uſage; That they ſpurn'd him as he lay upon the Ground, and forc'd him to ſhow his Face, which he would fain have covered, as lying under all the Confuſions of Guilt and Infamy; and in ſhort, that they kept him bound in a Chain, in order to drag him before the Tribunal of the Dead.

Telemachus, upon looking out of the Bark, ſees all the Strand covered with an innumerable Multitude of Shades, who, upon his jumping a-ſhore, immediately vaniſhed. He then purſues his Courſe to the Palace of *Pluto*, who is deſcribed as ſeated on his Throne in terrible Majeſty, with *Proſerpine* by his Side. At the Foot of his Throne was the pale hideous Spectre, who, by the Ghaſtlineſs of his Viſage, and the Nature of the Apparitions that ſurrounded him, diſcovers himſelf to be Death. His Attendants are, Melancholy, Diſtruſt, Revenge, Hatred, Avarice, Deſpair, Ambition, Envy, Impiety, with frightful Dreams, and waking Cares, which are all drawn very naturally in proper Actions and Poſtures. The Author, with great Beauty, places near his frightful Dreams an Aſſembly of Phantoms, which are often employed to terrify the Living, by appearing in the Shape and Likeneſs of the Dead.

The young Hero in the next Place takes a Survey of the different Kinds of Criminals that lay in Torture among Clouds of Sulphur, and Torrents of Fire. The Firſt of theſe were ſuch as had been guilty of Impieties, which every one hath an Horror for: To which is added, a Catalogue of ſuch Offenders that ſcarce appear to be faulty in the Eyes of the Vulgar. Among theſe, ſays the Author, are malicious Criticks, that have endeavoured to caſt a Blemiſh upon the Perfections of others; with whom he likewiſe places ſuch as have often hurt the Reputation of the Innocent, by paſſing a raſh Judgment on their Actions, without knowing the Occaſion of them. Theſe Crimes, ſays he, are more ſeverely puniſhed after Death, becauſe they generally meet with Impunity upon Earth.

Telemachus, after having taken a Survey of ſeveral other Wretches in the ſame Circumſtances, arrives at that Region of Torments in which wicked Kings are puniſhed. There are very fine Strokes of Imagination in the Deſcription which he gives of this unhappy Multitude. He tells us, That on one Side of them there ſtood a revengeful Fury, thundering in their Ears inceſſant Repetitions of all the Crimes they had committed upon Earth, with the Aggravations of Ambition, Vanity, Hardneſs of Heart, and all thoſe ſecret Affections of Mind that enter into the Compoſition of a Tyrant. At the ſame Time, ſhe holds up to them a large Mirror, in which every one ſees himſelf repreſented in the natural Horror and Deformity of his Character. On the other Side of them ſtands another Fury, that with an inſulting Deriſion, repeats to them all the Praiſes that their Flatterers had beſtowed upon 'em while they ſat upon their reſpective Thrones. She too, ſays the Author, preſents a Mirror before their Eyes, in which every one ſees himſelf adorn'd with all thoſe Beauties and Perfections in which

which they had been drawn by the Vanity of their own Hearts, and the Flattery of others. To puniſh them for the Wantonneſs of the Cruelty which they formerly exerciſed, they are now delivered up to be treated according to the Fancy and Caprice of ſeveral Slaves, who have here an Opportunity of tyrannizing in their Turns.

The Author having given us a Deſcription of theſe ghaſtly Spectres, who, ſays he, are always calling upon Death, and are placed under the Diſtillation of that burning Vengeance which falls upon them Drop by Drop, and is never to be exhauſted, leads us into a pleaſing Scene of Groves, filled with the Melody of Birds, and the Odours of a Thouſand different Plants. Theſe Groves are repreſented as riſing among a great many flowry Meadows, and watered with Streams that diffuſe a perpetual Freſhneſs, in the Midſt of an eternal Day, and a never-fading Spring. This, ſays the Author, was the Habitation of thoſe good Princes who were Friends of the Gods, and Parents of the People. Among theſe, *Telemachus* converſes with the Shade of one of his Anceſtors, who makes a moſt agreeable Relation of the Joys of *Elyſium*, and the Nature of its Inhabitants. The Reſidence of *Seſoſtris* among theſe happy Shades, with his Character and preſent Employment, is drawn in a very lively Manner, and with a great Elevation of Thought.

The Deſcription of that pure and gentle Light which overflows theſe happy Regions, and cloaths the Spirits of theſe virtuous Perſons, hath ſomething in it of that Enthuſiaſm which this Author was accuſed of by his Enemies in the Church of *Rome*; but however it may look in Religion, it makes a very beautiful Figure in Poetry.

The Rays of the Sun, ſays he, are Darkneſs in Compariſon with this Light, which rather deſerves the Name of Glory, than that of Light. It pierces the thickeſt Bodies, in the ſame Manner as the Sun-Beams paſs through Chryſtal: It ſtrengthens the Sight inſtead of dazzling it; and nouriſhes in the moſt inward Receſſes of the Mind, a perpetual Serenity that is not to be expreſs'd. It enters and incorporates it ſelf with the very Subſtance of the Soul: The Spirits of the Bleſſed feel it in all their Senſes, and in all their Perceptions. It produces a certain Source of Peace and Joy that ariſes in them for ever, running through all the Faculties, and refreſhing all the Deſires of the Soul. External Pleaſures and Delights, with all their Charms and Allurements, are regarded with the utmoſt Indifference and Neglect by theſe happy Spirits, who have this great Principle of Pleaſure within them, drawing the whole Mind to its ſelf, calling off their Attention from the moſt delightful Objects, and giving them all the Tranſports of Inebriation, without the Confuſion and the Folly of it.

I have here only mention'd ſome Maſter-Touches of this admirable Piece, becauſe the Original it ſelf is underſtood by the greater Part of my Readers. I muſt confeſs, I take a particular Delight in theſe Proſpects of Futurity, whether grounded upon the probable Suggeſtions of a fine Imagination, or the more ſevere Concluſions of Philoſophy; as a Man loves to hear all the Diſcoveries or Conjectures relating to a Foreign Country which he is, at ſome Time, to inhabit. Proſpects of this Nature lighten the Burden of any preſent Evil, and refreſh us under the worſt and loweſt Circumſtances of Mortality. They extinguiſh in us both the Fear and Envy of Human Grandeur. Inſolence ſhrinks its Head, Power diſappears; Pain, Poverty, and Death, fly before them. In ſhort, the Mind that is habituated to the lively Senſe of an Hereafter, can hope for what is the moſt terrifying to the Generality of Mankind, and rejoice in what is the moſt afflicting.

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